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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
16 December 1955

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Reviewer: [redacted] Date: 9/26/78

TO: Deputy Director (Intelligence)

SUBJECT: Indonesian Crisis

1. A serious governmental crisis has developed in Indonesia following the incident of 14 December when the ceremony to install a new deputy air chief of staff was broken up by mutinous air force personnel. That incident was apparently planned by air chief of staff Suryadarma, an associate of former defense minister Iwa, and seems to have had the backing of President Sukarno.

2. The American embassy reports that the cabinet which had met at 1700 on 15 December was still in session at 2300. Its task was to decide whether to enforce an order for Suryadarma's arrest or whether to resign. The embassy states that the lines are very clearly drawn between, on the one hand, Sukarno, Suryadarma, Iwa, leftist element of the National Party and Communist elements behind the scenes, and on the other hand, Prime Minister Harahap backed by other Masjumi political leaders, and the army. Vice President Hatta is giving moral support and encouragement to Harahap.

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3. The embassy reports [redacted] military police were engaged in arresting officers and men involved in the air force incident. This information suggests that the cabinet had decided to act rather than resign.

4. Nationwide voting for a constituent assembly took place on 15 December and it appears that Sukarno and leftist elements have sought to bring down the government before the returns were in and create a situation in which they would have a decisive influence over the considerable government reorganization that must take place during the next few months. Sukarno has been campaigning throughout the country and in a speech on 14 December he said it would be unreasonable for the Communists not to be represented in the next government since they had polled over 6 million votes in the September parliamentary elections.

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5. With the support of the army (the air force is small and of little political significance) the Harahap government would appear to be able to ride out this crisis. However, the cleavage between the leftists and the moderates has widened and the prospects for putting together a stable government on the basis of the September elections has been made much more difficult.

HUNTINGTON D. SHELDON
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